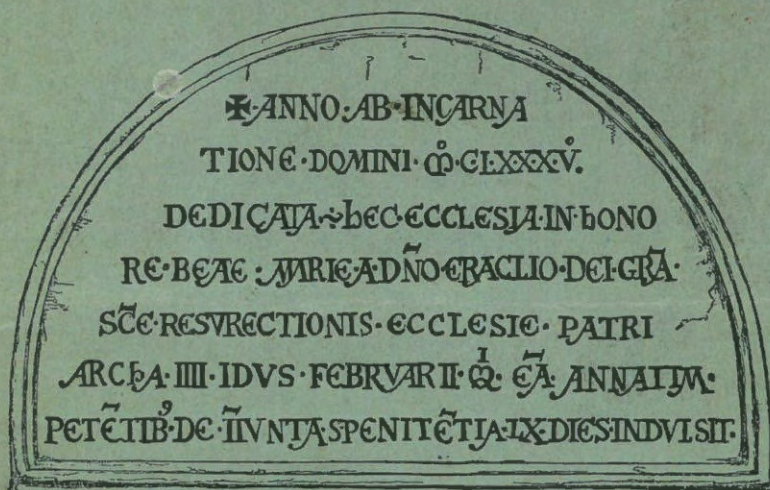


Bl  
Pamphlets

# A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE CHURCH



The ancient inscription on the Temple Church as it stood over the door leading into the Cloister. It was accidentally broken by workmen and removed in 1695.

*(English Translation.)*

ON THE 10TH OF FEBRUARY,  
IN  
THE YEAR FROM THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD, 1185.  
THIS CHURCH WAS CONSECRATED IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED MARY  
BY THE LORD HERACLIUS.  
BY  
THE GRACE OF GOD PATRIARCH OF THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION,\*  
WHO  
HATH INDULGED ALL THOSE ANNUALLY VISITING IT WITH SIXTY  
DAYS OF PENANCE ENJOINED THEM.

(\*In Jerusalem.)





Inscribed with all respect  
To Members of the American Bar Association  
on their visit to London, July, 1924.

## A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE CHURCH

BY

THE MASTER OF THE TEMPLE,  
1924.

[W. H. DRAPER]

THE long connection of the Law with the Temple has given rise to some uses of the name which should at once be clearly distinguished. The word was originally understood as applying simply to the Church, and perhaps such buildings as the Knights Templars used for their dwelling when in London. By degrees, when the Order of Templars had been dissolved and the Knights Hospitallers who, after a brief interval, became the possessors, let their buildings, one after another, to students of the Law, their chambers came to be called Inns of Court, *i.e.*, places of residence where those who practised and studied in the Courts of Law had their abode. But the original link between the Temple and those who dwelt around it survived, so that the Lawyers in the Inns of Court still used the name of the Church as embracing dwellings or chambers around it; and thus the word "Temple" came to include the Church and the places around it occupied by the Templars and their successors.

In the time of the Knights Templars (1185-1312) there was an Outer Temple also, *i.e.*, various buildings (not a Church) on the site now occupied by Devereux Court and Essex Street, but this never went to the

Hospitallers or the Lawyers. A new building bearing the same name, as being outside Temple Bar, stands opposite the Law Courts, in the Strand, with a passage through it into the Middle Temple, but has no other connection with the Knights Templars, or with the Societies of the Inns of Court.

#### THE ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS, THE BUILDERS OF THE CHURCH.

This famous military and religious Order of Knights was first founded in A.D. 1119 with nine members, who bound themselves to defend and protect pilgrims visiting the holy places in Jerusalem. Their two leaders were the Norman Knights, Hugo de Payens and Godfrey de St. Omer. They wore a white mantle with a red cross on the breast as the symbol of martyrdom. Their banner was of the black and white stripe, called in old French the *Beauséant*, which became their battle cry; and bore for its inscription the words *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis sed nomini tuo da gloriam*. By A.D. 1162 the Order had largely increased in numbers and importance. Hugo de Payens himself had visited England to stir up the spirit of knighthood in joining their enterprise; and met with the greatest support from Henry I. The chief distinctions within their ranks were three: Knights, Chaplains, and Service-Brethren. In time they had many associated helpers who were not actual members of the Order, men and women who contributed gifts of money; and with them some not yet old enough to be admitted, but who, with their parents' good will, offered themselves for future members.

At the head was the Grand Master, owning allegiance only to the Pope; but ruling in the Order



through a Chapter, without whose assent he could not alter its laws and regulations, nor make war, or conclude peace, or fill any of the higher offices. His residence was at first the City of Jerusalem. When it fell his seat was moved to Antioch, then to Acre, then to the Castle of the Pilgrims (built by pilgrim masons) near Cæsarea, and finally, to the Island of Cyprus. No Grand Master resided in Europe before the time of Jacques de Molay, in whose day the dissolution of the Order was brought about by Pope Clement V and Philip the Fair, of France.

The Order was constituted so that the members living in different countries were under a Grand Prior, sometimes called Master, and were denoted as "Provinces." In England the Master sat as a Peer of the Realm.

In the year 1240, *i.e.*, about seventy-five years before the Order was broken up, the whole number of their Churches and Chapels in all countries was 1,050. The first of their Churches in England was in Holborn, at the East corner of what is now Chancery Lane, whence they removed to the site of the present Temple Church, called therefore the New Temple, in the year 1185.

Just over a century from that time, viz., in 1292, the town of Acre fell into the hands of the enemy, the Templars lost all their possessions in the East, and those Knights that were in Palestine under Jacques de Molay retired to Cyprus.

In 1306 Pope Clement addressed letters to the Grand Masters of the Templars and of the Order called Hospitallers, inviting them to come to Europe to consult with him as to what measures could be taken to support the Kings of Armenia and Cyprus. They were asked to come as secretly as they could, and with a very small train. The Master of the Hospitallers,

being then engaged in the conquest of the island of Rhodes, delayed his acceptance of the invitation. But Jacques de Molay, Master of the Templars, immediately prepared to depart, and left Cyprus with sixty Knights and 150,000 florins of gold and a great quantity of silver, the whole requiring twelve horses to carry it. They came straight to Paris and deposited the treasure in their Temple Church in that City, which had been recently fortified with the erection near it of a square tower with four round towers at the corners. The walls were nine feet in thickness.

But no sooner were they and their treasure within reach of King Philip and in a land where the Pope could find officials who would be his obedient tools, than a secret design was formed to smite them at a stroke.

Philip sent orders to all his Governors throughout France to arm themselves on the 12th of October, 1306, and on the following night, but not sooner, to open the King's letter sent with the order and act according to its contents. So on Friday, October 13th, the Templars throughout France were arrested simultaneously at break of day. That was the beginning of the end of the Knights Templars as a military and religious Order.

But their extinction was a process long drawn out, dragging on from October, 1306, to May, 1312, in one land after another, where they were marked and hunted down.

In England King Edward II at first made some show of resistance to the Pope's decree and the vengeful cupidity of Philip of France, forbidding the infliction of any torture upon Templars in England in consideration of their former services to Christian pilgrims in danger. But presently he took the same step that Philip had taken in France, and on January 8th, 1308, every Templar in England was arrested,



their property was seized by the King, and William de la More, the Master, with all his brethren of the Temple Church, was imprisoned. Two years later, at the instance of inquisitors sent by the Pope, many of them were put to torture by what was called the discipline of the rack. Some of them under the stress confessed this and that of fantastic charges made against them. In process of time a Council held at Vienne, near Lyons, presided over by the Pope and attended by the French King Philip and his three sons, with a large body of troops, at its second session published a decree of the Pope abolishing the Order on April 3rd, 1312. A few months later William de la More Master of the Temple in London, died in prison in the Tower; and in the month of March of the year following (1313) Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Order, and two other of his most notable brethren, were by Philip's sentence burned to death publicly in Paris for repudiating the so-called confessions extorted from them on the rack.

#### THE LATER HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE CHURCH.

A period of confusion as to the ownership of the property of the Templars followed the dissolution of the Order. The Pope published a bull transferring it *in toto* to the Order of the Knights of the Hospital of St. John, who by the conquest of Rhodes had obtained great renown, and by the Master's delay in coming to Europe with the Templars had escaped their fate.

Edward II, however, refused at first to accept the Pope's decree. The Temple in London and all the preceptories in other counties dependent on it were placed under the survey of the Court of Exchequer and " extents " were directed to be taken of the same, after which they were confided to the care of

certain persons styled "Guardians of the lands of the Templars," who were to account for the rents and profits to the King's Exchequer. He then began to dispose of them as he chose. Early in 1313 he granted the Church and all adjoining buildings to Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, and in 1324, to Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, who gave them to Hugh le Spenser, the Younger. On his attainder they reverted to the Crown, and Edward II then assigned the Church and those parts of the land and buildings now belonging to the Inner and the Middle Temple to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. About 1346 the Hospitallers devised their property here, including the Church, to the Lawyers from Thavies Inn, Holborn, at a rent of £10 per annum. It remained as leasehold property with the Lawyers from the Hospitallers till the time of Henry VIII.

When the Order of the Knights Hospitallers was dissolved by Henry VIII the two societies of the Inner and the Middle Temple held the property on lease from the Crown until August 13th, 1609, when James I, in the sixth year of his reign, granted the freehold of the property to the two Societies "for the hospitation and education of the Professors and Students of the laws of the realm, subject to a rent-charge of £10 payable by each of the two Societies. In 1673 these rents were extinguished by purchase by the two Societies." (T. H. Bayliss.)

The Crown, however, retained in its own hands the appointment of the Master of the Temple, and this arrangement still holds.

There is one precious early record of the possessions of the Templars in London, consisting of the Inventory of the goods belonging to them covering the period from January 10th, 1307, to November 10th, 1308, from which it is not difficult to infer much of the



appearance of the Church in time of service at that date and as it continued perhaps without very much change until the middle of the sixteenth century or later. It is reprinted as Appendix F in Mr. T. H. Bayliss's "The Temple Church and Chapel of St. Ann," published by George Philip and Son, 1893. And in an earlier work on the "Knights Templars," by Mr. C. G. Addison, of the Inner Temple, published by Messrs. Longman in 1842, there is a note on page 553 which seems calculated to provoke some student or antiquarian in legal affairs to investigate a field overdue to be treated, unless it has since been attended to. The note is this: "The extents of the lands of the Templars are amongst the unarranged records in the Queen's Remembrancer's Office, and various Sheriffs' accounts are in the third chest in the Pipe Office."

#### THE FORM AND HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

When the Temple was dedicated in 1185 it consisted of the Round Church only, and that form was adopted in imitation of a temple adjoining the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Four other round churches were built by the Templars in England, and may still be seen, at Northampton, Ludlow, Cambridge, and Little Maplestead.

Some years after the Round Church was dedicated, the Templars had so increased that the large addition called the Oblong was added on to it as a kind of chancel, with beautiful pillars of Purbeck marble from Dorsetshire, which are so striking a feature of the building. The dedication of the Oblong took place in the year 1240 A.D. The painted decorations of the roof date only from 1843, but were executed in accordance with the theory that such decorations

were part of the architectural custom in vogue when the Church was built. There was added somewhere about this early period (1240-1280) on the south side of the Church a small Chapel called the Chapel of St. Ann, with an upper and a lower chamber, the last remains of which were only removed as late as 1825. A painting, made in 1823, proves it to have been beautiful in its proportion and design. There was access to the lower floor from the Round Church and to the upper floor from the oblong ; and until the sixteenth century it was used for services of small congregations. Afterwards it was taken for a muniment room and allowed to fall into decay. Writing in 1893, Mr. Bayliss says, " It is deeply to be regretted that this ancient historical chapel was pulled down to the ground in 1825, instead of being restored. I hope that the chapel will be restored ; when it might be used as a vestry or practice-room, as more space is wanted."

There is a definite record of its being in use as a chapel as early as 1282.

Having both an upper and lower storey it would have afforded room also for a school of sacred music, and the study of that art with which the Temple has so long been honourably associated.

Even now its foundations are preserved below the seven great paving stones outside the iron railings on the south side of the Round Church and extending a short distance parallel with the Oblong also ; but the only real picture I have seen drawn from the remains of the building itself above ground is that by Mr. Buckler, painted in 1823, and now in the Master's House.

#### INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH.

The present furnishing of the interior of the Church reflects the ideas and taste of 1843. In some respects



it is beyond dispute that the work then accomplished was a true restoration and repair, but in others the judgment of the architect or those who employed him was at fault. If we recall the appearance of the Church as it was seen by some of those who lived at the time and saw it both before and after the change, we can, perhaps, form judgments of our own.

As regards the moving of the organ to its present position from its former place (which it occupied less than two centuries) between the Round and the Oblong, it is clear that the restoring of the open view of the whole Church was a great gain. We can read in Mr. Addison's book how it first struck a Member of the Inner Temple, accustomed to its previous state (though why he writes as if the early equipment of three altars still existed, I do not know). "The eye of the beholder," he says, "is first arrested and enchanted by the long, unbroken, unobstructed view of the Church, from the western doorway to the altar, with its painted ceilings, innumerable marble columns, richly decorated altars, and stained windows, shedding a bright glow upon the walls and pavement, all formerly concealed and shrouded from view by the cumbrous organ gallery and wooden partitions. . . .

"The ancient vaulted ceiling was richly painted under the direction and superintendence of Mr. Willement. The decorations introduced by him strongly resemble those of the illuminated MS. coeval with the Church. They consist of flowing ornaments, drawn with decision in powerful colours, strongly contrasted on a ground tinted to represent the hue of ancient vellum, or perhaps the rich colour of Normandy stone when first raised from the quarry."

It must, however, be confessed that the effect of eighty years of modern London atmosphere has been

to tone down almost to dullness the decoration thus described.

Again, it was indubitably a necessary and proper restoration to clear away the two feet of earth which had been imported and superimposed on the original tiled floor, hiding the bases of the pillars and lowering the height of the building ; but there were two opinions at the time as to the taste and judgment shown in proceeding to cover the floor as it was covered. The adverse opinion was thus expressed : “ Anyone who saw the Temple Church a few months ago rising in all its native majesty and simplicity from one uniform level area cannot but mourn over the introduction of these cumbrous seats, the injurious effect of filling up the angle formed by the side walls and the floor of the building with a slanting mass of heavy woodwork must be apparent to every eye. It has made the Church look much smaller and much less lofty than it did before, and has sadly impaired the beauty of the aisles. The breadth of stone wall which previously extended between the marble stringing course and the floor gave to the windows an elevation which they now no longer seem to possess ; and the uninterrupted side view of the walls of the Church, from the floor to the ceiling, added greatly to the apparent height and grandeur of the building. The small clustered columns, too, attached to the side walls, with their bases resting on a stone seat or plinth, which extended around the Church, had an elegant appearance when seen from their bases to the capitals, and gave a tone and character to the aisles which are now in a great measure lost.”

At the east end of the Church there have been several changes made at different periods. Originally there were three altars, one in the centre with a broad passage approaching it, and on either side a smaller



altar approached by an aisle. In 1843, when a large oak screen and altar piece were removed, there were found behind it three deeply recessed arches in the wall under the east window ; the centre arch was the largest and semi-circular in form ; those on either side were smaller and not round ; there were still left in the stones at the side the marks of locks ; and fastenings of doors were still to be seen.

It is a pity that these arches were soon again covered up behind a new reredos erected during the 1843 restoration ; and that when this was itself removed some fifteen years ago the same mistake was repeated and the old work in the east wall once more hidden from sight.

In the south-east wall, again, there are more than half hidden from view two most interesting old features of the Church, one, the recumbent figure of a Bishop carved from a single block of Purbeck Marble, and supposed to be a monument of Silvester de Everdon, Bishop of Carlisle, who was killed by a fall from his horse in 1255 and buried in the Temple Church ; the other a double piscina of the same material with a niche between it and the east wall, which would have been used for the sacred vessels required in the Communion Service. A similar but rather larger niche or aumbry is also on the northern wall.

For fuller details of the architecture and of the monuments in the Church, reference should be made to some of the many books dealing with the Church, the more recent of which are the volume on the Temple in the " Little Guides " series, as well as the earlier books by T. H. Bayliss, C. G. Addison, and the excellent small book by George Worley, published by George Bell & Sons, in 1907, in Bell's " Cathedral " series.

The occasion which has called for this short account of the Temple, makes it becoming to mention some

of the links it has with men of eminence in the past, more especially with those who have been associated with the United States of America and with Canada.

We will begin with the names of certain Masters of the Temple, because they were the oldest officers of all, and a few of them have contributed to the foundations of Law itself, not least by their contributions to true Religion.

WILLIAM DE LA MORE deserves commemoration not only for his faithfulness to his trust in enduring to the end, and dying in the Tower in 1312, but also because it is his signature which we have still existing in a deed conveying a grant of land in East Haddlesey, near Selby, in Yorkshire, affixed by him as Master of the Temple, and sealed with that early emblem of the Knights Templars, the *Agnus Dei*, which was adopted as their Arms by the Middle Templars in 1615. There is a cast of this beautiful seal in the British Museum (No. 4488, 83, c. 39), which is here reproduced on p. 15. On one side is the Agnus, with the words *Sigillum Templi*, with cruciform nimbus and banner. On the other side is a small elliptical counterseal, containing a couped bust, bearded and wearing a cap, with the words TESTIS SUM AGNI. The Inner Temple had adopted the Pegasus as their Arms in the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth.

RICHARD HOOKER, who was Master from 1585-1591, is known wherever English is known, as one of the great prose writers before Milton, and for depth of thought and learning one of the greatest theologians we have ever produced. His *Ecclesiastical Polity* not only justified the claim of the English Church to be the same Church before and after the Reformation but also laid down clearly the relation between laws human and laws divine. Some of his most noble passages have been often quoted, and one as recently



as 19th July, 1918, by the Treasurer of the Middle Temple, at a Dinner in the Hall, given for Members of the United States Bar then in England and serving in the American Military and Naval Forces in that year in Europe. The guests present were twenty in number, and Hooker's words then recalled were these:—

“Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things in Heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, the greatest as not exempt from her power.”

A later Master, well known in his day, and who held the office from 1704 to 1753 was THOMAS SHERLOCK, who at the same time was Bishop of London; among other of his writings he published a book called “The Tryal of the Witnesses,” in which he used his acquaintance with Lawyers to cast the Scripture testimony to the Resurrection into the form of a legal trial. By 1755 it had reached its thirteenth edition, but is now, like Milton's Treatises on Divorce, ‘seldom pored on.’

Among the more recent Masters the late Dr. Vaughan (1869–1894) and Canon Ainger (1894–1904) were well known by their work and writings.

It is not, however, with the Masters of the Temple that the visit of the Members of the American and Canadian Bar is concerned so much as with their fellow-lawyers of the Bench and Bar, who are, of course, in the later history of the Temple, a large and bright constellation of notable men, from the time of Sir Edward Coke (1552–1632), John Selden (1584–1654), and Sir William Blackstone (1723–1780), down to the present day. We can but mention a few here and there whose names are household words on both sides of the Atlantic.

Selden's “Table-Talk,” not published till after his death, gives him a currency far beyond legal

circles, and many who never wore wig or gown look with interest upon his monument in the Temple Church.

In connection with the *Declaration of Independence*, it is much to be observed that no less than FIVE of its signatories were Members of the Middle Temple. In the Treasurer's Room may be seen a facsimile of the Document hanging on the wall, and their names marked with an asterisk; while a brief note of the career of each of them may be found in the volume of "Notable Middle Templars," printed in 1902, where there are at least thirteen Members of the Inn mentioned who rose to eminence in American public life. Charles Carroll (1737-1832), John Dickinson (1732-1808), Thomas Heyward (1746-1809), Arthur Lee (1740-1792), William Livingstone (1723-1790), Thomas Lynch (1749-1779), Thomas McKean (1734-1817), Arthur Middleton (1743-1787), Peyton Randolph (1723-1775), William Rawle (1759-1836), Joseph Reed (1741-1785), Edward Rutledge (1749-1800), John Rutledge (1739-1800).

There is some contention about the inclusion of the illustrious and romantic name of Sir Francis Drake (1552-1618), who is entered among these notable Middle Templars, but who was without doubt a Member of the Inner Temple.

Other names worthy of note of men who attained high position in America and who belonged to the Inner Temple were those of JOHN WINTHROP, First Governor of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, and PAUL DUDLEY, Chief Justice of the same Colony.

But this Short Account, if it would justify its title, must draw to a close. Once in the middle of the seventeenth century, George Herbert, one of England's sacred Poets, in a time of trouble wrote the familiar couplet—

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land  
Readie to passe to the *American* Strand.



Now, in the first quarter of the twentieth century, in the name of Religion, as well as in the name of Law, a Master of the Temple and all the Masters of the Bench of the two Honourable Societies of the Inner and of the Middle Temple rejoice to welcome you back whether you come by water or by air, and to assure you that Religion and Law when they alighted on your coasts never left the coasts of Britain and, as we trust, never shall ; but ever remain established and strong in their ancient seat, ready to greet you when you re pleased to return, and we in the old country are willing to believe that in your great and wide territory you yourselves will have been able to discover some things whereby the knowledge and practice of Religion and Law may be advanced.



TESTIS SUM AGNI.

*Recat 10/77*

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